KEEPING IN
TOUCH

October 1996

General Conference in Syndey Less than a Year Away

General Conference in Australia is less than a year away! Final preparations are underway for the most exciting General Conference in UFMCC history.

Located in one of the most beautiful cities, one of the safest travel destinations, and one of the most hospitable countries in the world, UFMCC General

COVER STORY NATHAN MECKLEY

Conference 1997 will be held July 20 through 25 in Sydney, Australia. At least 100 Australian MCC'ers are projected to attend and promotions will encourage individuals from Asia and the South Pacific to attend, making it the most international General Conference to date. Alan Boesak, noted South African anti-apartheid activist and theologian, will be a featured speaker among other special guests. Our General Conference will be the largest lesbian/gay religious gathering ever convened in that region of the world. It's a conference you won't want to miss and there are things you can do now to prepare for the General Conference in July:

Save for your conference expenses. Depending upon the travel and lodging options you choose, if you register early or late, and other variables like food and souvenirs, it may cost many North Americans from $1500 to $1700 (U.S.). If you or your church haven't started saving yet, start now!

Apply for your passport and visa. All visitors will need a valid passport and a visa (with the exception of New Zealanders) for entry into Australia. You should check your local listing of national governmental agencies for the appropriate office to obtain a passport. Contact your nearest Australian Consulate or Australian Embassy for a visitor visa, issued free of charge by mail or in person. Also, Above and Beyond Tours can provide visa processing for a fee.

Begin making your travel arrangements. Above and Beyond Tours is the official 1997 General Conference travel company and they have prepared an excellent round-trip travel and lodging package beginning for as low as $1195 (U.S.). If you're considering extending your stay in Australia or the South Pacific, or if you're planning to use frequent flyer miles, their travel specialists are prepared to assist you. Even if you're considering using another travel agency, give them a call for comparison — it will be hard to beat! Call Above and Beyond at 800-397-2681 or 415-284-1666. For your convenience if you're traveling from the United Kingdom or continental Europe, contact ManAround in Middlesex, England, phone 181-902-7177 or fax 181-903-7357. From South Africa, contact Rennies Travel in Capetown, phone 21-21-5013 or fax 21-25-2810.

Check your insurance. In the unlikely event of illness or accident while you're traveling, you should have adequate medical and other insurance. Australia has reciprocal national health insurance with the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Italy, Malta and Sweden. For others, contact your insurance carriers to see if you're covered. If not, traveler's insurance is highly recommended and can be purchased through Above and Beyond or other travel agencies. Also, trip cancellation insurance is recommended.

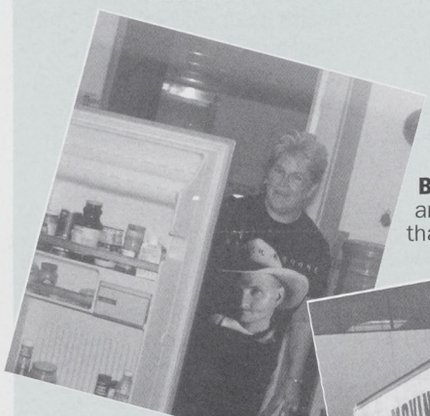
See September Keeping in Touch for details on travel packages.

■ Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson (far left) and Rev. Dianne Fisher (far right) meeting with members of Womens Secretariat in Sydney, Australia.

UFMCC ON THE MIOVE

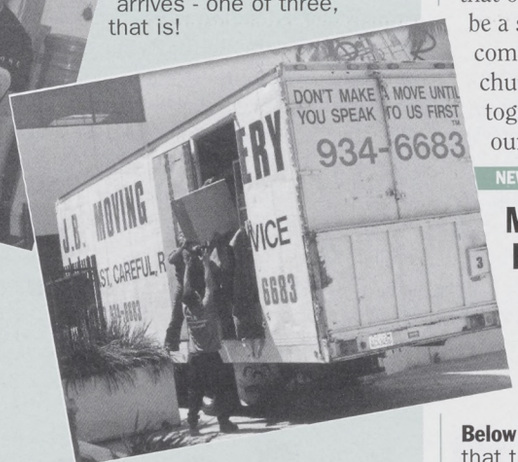
Above Hurry up and wait - isn't that the way it always goes? Mr. Ravi Verma, Ms. Elsa Martinez, Mr. Dave Martin and Ms. Nancy Fackrell wait for the movers to arrive at the new offices.

Right Oh my aching back - all these forms can be heavy. Mr. Roi Hudson-Anaya packs up the Resource Center.



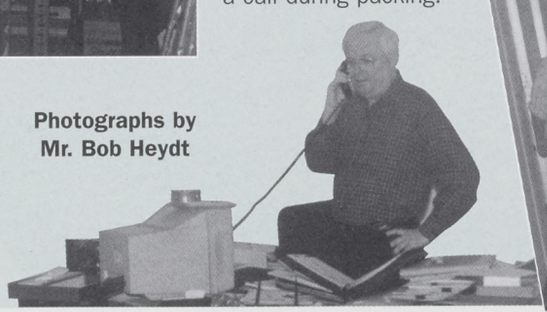
Left UFMCC Controller Ms. Margaret Mahlman inspects the lunchroom.

Below The truck finally arrives - one of three, that is!



Left
Finally a chance to get out of the closet forever! Ms. Nancy Fackrell packs the office supplies.

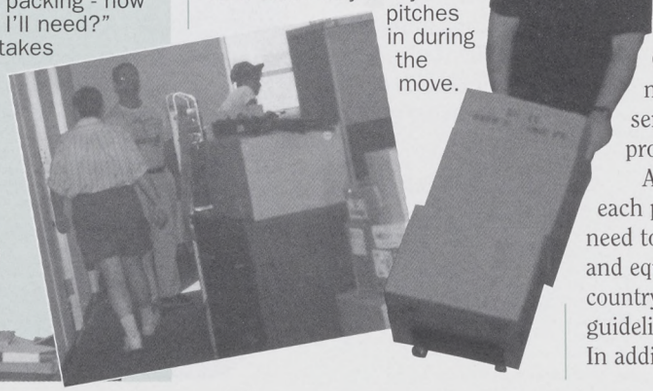
Below "I'm trying to start packing - how many boxes do you think I'll need?" Rev. Elder Don Eastman takes a call during packing.



Photographs by Mr. Bob Heydt

Below Left Will all of this fit on that truck? Rev. Dana Cagle and Rev. Steve Pieters supervise the move from the old offices.

Below Right Well folks, come on and follow the leader! Rev. Elder Troy Perry pitches in during the move.



GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS RAVI VERMA

Home At Last – Praise God We Made It!

With the saints in heaven watching, and with prayers, donations and good wishes from so many friends - the Global Headquarters of the Universal Fellowship of MCC moved into its new home on September 1.

The Fellowship Offices had been in the last location for 18 years. It took the entire fellowship staff, 3 moving trucks, and 12 crew to move the offices to West Hollywood. As part of the renovation of the offices the computer network has been extended to the entire staff.

It is an exhilarating experience to be in attractive surroundings and in a neighborhood that is welcoming us with open arms. The neighbors, local businesses, and government officials are thrilled to have the headquarters of the "largest gay and lesbian organization in the world" in their city. Our commitment is that our new surroundings will be a symbol of our renewed commitment to serve our local churches, so that we can together fulfill God's calling to our community.

NEWS MARRIAGE

Mississippi Governor Bans Same Sex Marriage

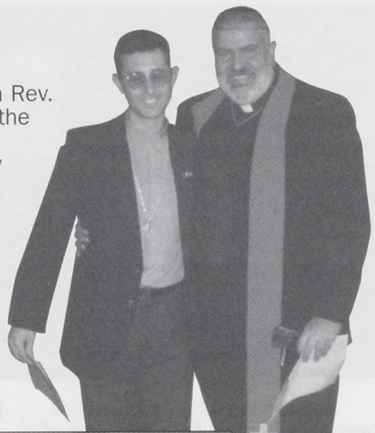
In August, Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice signed an executive order banning same-sex marriages. The Mississippi legislature had declined to pass such a measure during its 1996 session. The interim Pastoral Leader of MCC of the Rainbow in Jackson, MS, Carl Matthews Naylor and his partner Larry Naylor, have been interviewed by four TV stations in the Jackson and Biloxi areas. Carl and Larry have been in relationship for 28 years. As a result of the TV interviews, they were also interviewed by the New York Times. So far, Carl reports, there were 110 phone calls the night of the airing of the interviews. All have been positive! Saying such things as: "You are good role models", "You dispel the stereotypical myth about gay men", and, "Keep up the good work". The overwhelming support has surprised them.

GLOBAL OUTREACH CONFERENCE

Clergy Training Expanding

During the Leadership Conference this past August, our Spanish speaking MCC leaders from around the globe, gathered for a meeting. Present for this meeting were: Pablo Hernandez Navarro, Interim Pastor from Puerto Rico, Ramon Flores from MCC New York, Guillermo Reyna, Lay Delegate from Mexico City, Rev. Jorge Sosa, Area Coordinator for Mexico, Ana Vargas, Co-Pastor of the Spanish-speaking parish at MCC LA and translator and Alejandro Soria, Pastoral Leader of ICM Buenos Aires. The purpose of this meeting was to collaborate efforts to meet the new requirements for clergy training and lay leader development. In the process of that meeting Rev. Elder Wilhelmina Hein, Rev. Elder Darlene Garner and Rev. Judy Dahl met to address needs and to serve as assistants in this process.

As a result of this meeting each person has determined the need to research requirements and equivalencies in their own country in developing UFMCC guidelines for clergy credentials. In addition, the need to begin a



■ **Right** Sr. Alejandro Soria with Rev. Elder Troy Perry standing in the new office building after the blessing of our new property in West Hollywood.

■ **Below** Standing left to right: Pablo Hernandez Navarro, Julio Flores, Guillermo Reyna, Rev. Jorge Sosa, Ana Vargas. Seated left to right: Rev. Judy Dahl, Rev. Elder Darlene Garner, Rev. Elder Wilhelmina Hein.

shared Lay leader program with all our Spanish-speaking countries was highlighted.

Since this meeting, Rev. Elder Perry has named three people to serve as an "umbrella" Board of Ordained Ministry for Global Outreach. Ms. Teri Tompkins, Rev. Jorge Delgado and Rev. Judy Dahl are developing general overall guidelines which will serve as a blueprint for each GO country. Then, in keeping with the need for creativity and flexibility, each country will devise their own set of standards for credentialing clergy and developing lay leaders. A Board of Ordained Ministry will be set up on a case by case basis as needed for interviews and oversight.

Thanks to our Spanish sojourners, we are able to assure the opportunity and ability to begin training programs for our future global leaders.

AIDS MINISTRY QUILT DISPLAY

UFMCC At the Quilt Display

Many MCC members will be present for the October 11-13 display of the Names Project Quilt in Washington, D.C. UFMCC AIDS Ministry will share an exhibit booth at the Quilt Display with the United Methodist Churches' AIDS Ministry.

Rev. Steve Pieters, Field Director of UFMCC AIDS Ministry, will be active in a number of related activities that weekend. He will read names at the Quilt Display, as well as participate in the Interfaith Healing Service at the National Cathedral on Sunday evening, October 13. Rev. Candace Shultis, pastor of MCC Washington, DC, is a member of the planning committee for this service, as well as a participant.

Pieters will also be teaching at the National Skills Building Conference at the Washington Hilton, and will respond to a paper presented at the National Episcopal AIDS Conference at the National Cathedral. The Episcopal Conference will be held Thursday, October 10. The National Skills Building Conference takes place October 10-13.

Mid-Atlantic District Coordinator Rev. Arlene Ackerman reports that many MCC members from around her district will be traveling to Washington for the Quilt Display and other events that weekend.

The National Skills Building Conference, co-sponsored by the U.S. AIDS National Interfaith Network, the U.S. National Minority AIDS Council, and the U.S. National Association of People with AIDS, is the premier educational conference for workers in the field of HIV/AIDS. UFMCC has been an active participant in the Conference since its inception.

MEMORIAL REV. T. EDWARD HELMS

UFMCC is saddened to announce that Rev. T. Edward Helms passed away from a heart attack, September 17, 1996. His funeral was held in Wilmington, North Carolina at the Andrews Valley Chapel, on Saturday, September 21 and Rev. Elder Troy Perry officiated at the funeral. Rev. Helms came into the UFMCC in 1979 after being ordained in the United Methodist Church in 1972. Rev. Helms was licensed in MCC in 1980, and pastored MCC of Tidewater in Norfolk, Virginia from 1979-1981. He founded and pastored MCC of the Disciples in Washington, DC from 1984-1987. From 1987-1992 he pastored First MCC of Kansas, Wichita, Kansas, and from 1992-1995 he pastored Church of the Trinity MCC in Sarasota, Florida. Please pray for his daughter, two sons, and his brothers and sisters.

DISTRICTS FLORIDA

Church Vandalized

Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota, Florida was vandalized, Monday September 16, 1996. The administrative workers at the church found the offices open and desks, computers and file cabinets overturned. The Sarasota police are treating the incident as a burglary and attempted arson. Only $60.00 were stolen and a small fire was attempted in the file cabinets. Rev. Gus Kein said, " I believe that it is a hate crime, office equipment was not stolen, and robbery was not the primary motive."

A FELLOWSHIP OF **ACTIVITY**

■ Congratulations to the following churches who celebrated their Anniversaries in September: MCC Louisville, Kentucky, 24th Anniversary • Church of the Holy Spirit MCC, Des Moines, Iowa, 22nd Anniversary • MCC Illiamo, Quincy, Illinois, 21st Anniversary • MCC of the Rockies, Denver, Colorado, 23rd Anniversary • First MCC of Kansas, Wichita, Kansas, 22nd Anniversary

■ The combined choirs of the Chicagoland MCC's sang for the televised portion of the Human Rights Campaign conference at which Rev. Elder Troy Perry received the Humanitarian Award.

■ MCC of the Redwood Empire, Guerneville, California will celebrate their 14th Anniversary on Oct. 12 and 13 with a Spaghetti Feed, Gospel Concert featuring Marsha Stevens and a glory filled worship service.

■ Congratulations to MCC of the Rockies, Denver, Colorado, and Rev. Jim Burns he was elected their new Senior Pastor.

■ Congratulations to Ted Conway who was elected to the Board of Positive Voices, a LesBiGay support and action group in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

■ Rev. Andy Sidden, pastor of Spirit of Life MCC in Holiday, Florida, has been appointed to the Pasco County Domestic Violence Task Force. The group was established by the Pasco Sherriff's office, through a state grant. Rev. Sidden is chairperson of a cultural diversity/religion sub-committee. The task force will promote awareness of domestic violence and recommend methods for preventing it.

■ Rev. Dusty Pruitt has been selected to be the new interim Pastor for Gentle Shepherd MCC, Phoenix, Arizona during their pastoral search.

■ Congratulations to Excel of the Lakes who received the "Well Done Thou Good and Faithful Servant" award at the last Great Lakes District Conference.

■ Rev. Dr. Mona West, the Dean of Samaritan Institute for Religious Studies has announced, in a letter to Rev. Pederson, that Rev. Dana Cagle has been chosen to serve as the Samaritan Education Facilitator for the Southwest District.

WHITE HOUSE PROTEST

Rev. White Leads Activists Arrested at White House

Nine individuals were arrested outside the White House, September 13, 1996. They were calling on President Bill Clinton to veto DOMA, the Defense of Marriage Act. They are in order of arrest: 1) Rev. Ken South, Washington, DC, Executive Director of the AIDS National Interfaith Network; 2) Will Brennan, Washington, DC, Executive Director of the National Association of Black and White Men Together; 3) Jim Bennett, Washington, DC, partner of Lambda Rising Bookstores; 4) Rev. Harry Stock, Washington, DC, Pastor of Church of the Disciples MCC; 5) Deacon Maccubbin, Washington, DC, partner of Lambda Rising Bookstores; 6) Steve Michael, Washington, DC, is HIV+, is a founding member of ACT UP in Washington; 7) Rev. Mel White, Laguna Beach, CA, Justice Minister of the UFMCC; 8) Wayne Turner, Washington, DC, founding member of ACT UP in Washington; 9) Gary Nixon, Laguna Beach, CA, executive assistant to the Justice Minister of UFMCC.

Maccubbin and Bennett, Michael and Turner, and White and Nixon are life partners. All nine were arrested, fined and released by the US Park Police.

ACTIVIST ISSUE STEVE PIETERS

MCC-SF Responds to Medical Need for Marijuana

Many people today face the difficult challenges of HIV/AIDS, cancer, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and glaucoma. There are those who believe that one of the safest therapeutic drugs available to people living with conditions such as these is marijuana. Many have illegally enjoyed the relief of nausea and pain associated with cancer, AIDS, and arthritis which marijuana provides. Many people living with AIDS have successfully fought "wasting syndrome" using marijuana to stimulate their appetites. Marijuana has been known to ease the spasms of multiple sclerosis. Marijuana has been widely used for a number of medical purposes for years, but in the United States, this compassionate use remains illegal.

■ The congregation and Rev. Michael Piazza at the unveiling the model of the New Cathedral of Hope MCC building.They plan to break ground in the year 2000.

In response to these medical needs, venues were created in San Francisco and Los Angeles to provide marijuana to those who could prove a medical need. Recently, both of these "Cannabis Clubs" were shut down by state authorities in what appears to be a politically motivated election year action.

Marijuana for medical use has now become a primary issue for AIDS activists in California. A measure on the November ballot would legalize medical use of marijuana in California. A poll in the Los Angeles Times shows a clear majority of voters favoring the passage of this measure. UFMCC AIDS Ministry sent out a letter to all California MCC's, urging support of this initiative.

When San Francisco's "Cannabis Club" was shut down, MCC San Francisco made international news in August when Pastor Jim Mitulski handed out 1/8-ounce bags of marijuana to those who could prove a medical need, at a special event in the church. On September 13,

Fourth Fosdick Convocation on Preaching and Worship

at The Riverside Church April 1-4, 1997

"Claiming Our Voices, Doing Justice, Dancing with Vision."

CLAIMING OUR VOICES * DOING JUSTICE * DANCING WITH VISION

4th FOSDICK CONVOCATION

Questions to be explored by the Convocation include:

* How do you find your own voice in preaching and worship?
* Who are the silenced voices in the church and Christian communities today?
* What does justice mean in the contemporary world?
* What visions will move us into a new millennium?

Preaching	Barbara Lundblad, Jeremiah Wright, Chung Hyun-Kyung, and James A. Forbes
Noonday Speakers	Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, Sallie McFague and James M. Washington
Workshops	Mornings and afternoons, led by innovative ministers, layleaders, scholars and artists
Daily Bible Study	Renita Weems

For more information, contact:
The Riverside Church, Fosdick Convocation, Room 243, 490 Riverside Drive, NY, NY 10027
Tel 212/870-6803 Fax 212/870-6805 e-mail J_Butler.parti@ecunet.org http://www.uts.columbia.edu/~fosdick
Registration fee is $100. Lodging and meals are the participant's responsibility.

The Riverside Church in the City of New York

MCC San Francisco once again hosted the distribution of marijuana.

Since MCC-SF's efforts were successful, with no trouble from authorities, Delores Street Baptist Church and two other non-MCC churches pledged to follow MCC's lead in providing sanctuary and a space for distribution for those who could show a medical need for marijuana.

Rev. Jim Mitulski reports that at the second distribution, there were "No legal problems. It was very quiet and boring. There has been enormous support for this from the community, unlike anything else I've seen in the ten years I've been here."

Mayor Willie Brown made a public statement, calling the distribution "a very good program." He has followed the program closely, appointing his aide, Dean Goodwin, as his liaison to this project.

There was no police presence at the distribution. Formal assurances from the police department and the District Attorney's office stated that they were actively in support of the program. Police commissioner Pat Norman has convened a task force that is managing this project through the Healing Alternatives Foundation (the distributor of record).

The "Cannabis Club" in Los Angeles was shut down in September, and in response the Crescent Heights United Methodist Church has taken on the task of distributing marijuana for medical use in that city.

Please remember Rev. Mitulski and MCC San Francisco in your prayers as they continue their program of compassion for those with a medical need for marijuana. For more information contact Rev. Jim Mitulski at MCC San Francisco, 415-863-4434.

Rev. Steve Pieters is Field Director of UFMCC AIDS Ministry.

SUGGESTED VIEWING PBS

With God on Our Side

"With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America," a six-hour documentary series that chronicles one of the most important political and cultural phenomena in contemporary America from post World War II to the present, will be presented on PBS stations beginning September 27, 1996. An in-depth and non- ideological look at the controversial movement, this series traces its roots from the anxious "Christian anti-Communism" of the 1950's to the sophisticated politics of the Christian Coalition today. Several MCC'ers including Rev. Mel White and Rev. Steve Pieters are featured in the series.

DISTRICTS PRAYING TOGETHER

National Day of Prayer

On September 22 churches held services of prayer and fasting, to pray that President Clinton will act to veto the Defense of Marriage Act and to issue an Executive Order modeled on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. The membership of all Metropolitan Community Churches was asked to write and phone the White House to ask President Clinton to move on these two issues. Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson said, "Gay and lesbian people and others who have experienced oppression have a great deal to teach us about family values, loyalty, commitment and love. Our country needs to value every family."

DISTRICTS ON THE AIR

Weekly Cable Show in Albuquerque

Rev. Dr. Fred C. Williams, Senior Pastor at MCC Albuquerque, is appearing weekly on Albuquerque's Community Cable Channel 27. The videotaped sermons of Pastor Fred are included with selected parts of Troy Perry's videotape, "God, Gays and the Gospel." Other portions of MCCA's worship services and activities are also featured in each week's program.

MEETING

The General Council will be meeting on October 18-21, in West Hollywood, California, the council will be working on goal setting for the denomination. Ms. JoNee Shelton has been invited to the General Council meeting as Chair of Commission on the Laity. She will attend with voice and no vote.

DOING **JUSTICE**

Rev. Mel White

Stand Up For Your Rights

Gary and I just returned from our 14 day Fast for Justice in Washington, DC. Perhaps you saw the picture in USA Today or your local papers describing "...gay Christians praying on the Senate steps for the defeat of the Defense of Marriage Act." After the Senate joined the House in passing this tragic bill (85-14) denying lesbian and gay couples all the rights that go automatically with heterosexual marriage, we moved our prayer vigil to the White House. On Friday, September 13, after celebrating communion in Lafayette Park, we tried to deliver a letter to the President urging him to veto DOMA. Nine of us knelt in prayer on the White House sidewalk to demonstrate our genuine concern and were arrested by Capitol police.

By the time you read this editorial, the American President will have decided to sign, to veto, or to ignore the bill. If he signed it, for the first time in history, the legislative and executive branches of the U.S. Government will have used their combined powers to designate all lesbian and gay Americans as second-class-citizens, denying us a long list of rights we need to sustain, support, and protect our relationships.

Those 175-250 rights denied us include: burial determination for our spouse; child custody; divorce protections; exemption from property tax on partner's death; immigration rights for foreign spouse; insurance breaks; joint adoption and foster care; joint parenting (insurance coverage, school records); medical decisions on behalf of partner; various property rights; reduced rate memberships; social security survivor benefits; tax breaks; visitation of partner's children; visitation of partner in hospital and prison; etc, etc, etc.

Gary and I want to thank our three pastors in the nation's Capitol: the Rev. Candace Shultis, the Rev. Elder Darlene Garner, the Rev. Harry Stock (and all the members of their three congregations, especially Will Dennis-Brennan, the Executive Director of the National Association of Black and White Men Together, the Rev. Ken South, Executive Director of the AIDS National Interfaith Network, Michael Nichols, and Albert Hutchings, our co-Chairs for providing their generous, loving, and prayerful support during our 2 week fast.

More than 25 years ago, our founder, the Rev. Elder Troy Perry, showed us that obeying Christ's call to do justice sometimes requires public protest, personal risk, and even civil disobedience. Wherever injustice threatens any of God's children, gay and straight alike, we who love Christ and are called to do His will must take our stand. With all the gains we have made in the U.S. and around the globe, we must be vigilant. Please, encourage each member of your congregation to take a stand during the difficult and dangerous days ahead.

Are you preaching about justice from your pulpit? Are you including specific prayers in your Sunday services for those who are suffering injustice in your town and around the world? Are you including the great justice songs in your Sunday worship? Have you organized to get everyone on your church mailing list registered (and informed) to vote. Have you taken special offerings for victims of injustice whose homes or churches have been burned, whose bodies and spirits have been broken? Have you joined one or all of the local justice organizations in your town, as an individual and as a congregation? Do you promote and attend their meetings?

For the past two weeks, I saw three UFMCC congregations and their pastors mobilize without warning to work for justice on behalf of their sisters and brothers across America. I salute them for their courage and their sacrifice. I can't wait to see what God will do for and through our Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches if we really get serious about doing justice in Christ's name.

CONTINUING EDUCATION REV MAGGIE TANIS

Continuing education is a great way to keep yourself excited and on the cutting edge of ministry. Its also a requirement for all UFMCC clergy. If you are looking for some continuing education opportunities for the remainder of 1996, check out these ideas.

▶Samaritan Institute for Religious Studies is offering the following classes this fall:

Oct. 23-27	**Sexuality Studies**	**Cost: $85**
Location: MCC New York		Instructor: R. Goss
Oct. 30-31	**Preaching**	**Cost: $85**
Location: MCC Tampa		Instructor: J. Brock
Oct. 30-31	**Supervising Clergy Training**	**Cost: $100**
Location: Lowell, Maryland		
Oct. 31	**Advising Clergy Training**	**Cost: $50**
Location: Lowell, Maryland		
Oct. 30-Nov. 1	**Understanding the Bible**	**Cost: $85**
Location: Church/Holy Spirit MCC		Instructor: B. Arthur
Nov. 2-3	**Understanding the Bible**	**Cost: $85**
Location: Des Moines, Iowa		Instructor: B. Arthur
Nov. 9	**Preaching**	**Cost: $85**
Location: Joy MCC, Orlando, FL		Instructor: J. Brock

For more information, contact Samaritan Institute for Religious Studies, P.O. Box 688, Lewisville, TX 75067, (972) 221-7749.

▶For those on the internet, check out classes being offered on-line. There are a variety of classes on the net on every thing from theology to computers. One resource is the CCF School, located at CCFSchool@aol.com. They are offering a class this fall on The Lord's Prayer; cost is $145.

▶Check out your local community college or seminary for a class. Many seminaries offer one-day seminars that you can attend. Some colleges that are on a quarterly schedule may still have classes that you can sign up for.If you can't find a theologically oriented class, consider a class on small-business marketing, publicity, computer use, or teaching techniques that you can adapt and put to use in your church.

▶Attend a workshop offered by consultants. Call and see if any workshops are being offered in your area. A couple of options offered nationally in the United States are:

SkillPath Seminars, 6900 Squibb Rd, Suite 300, Mission, Kansas 66201-2768. Call 1-800-873-7545 for dates & locations

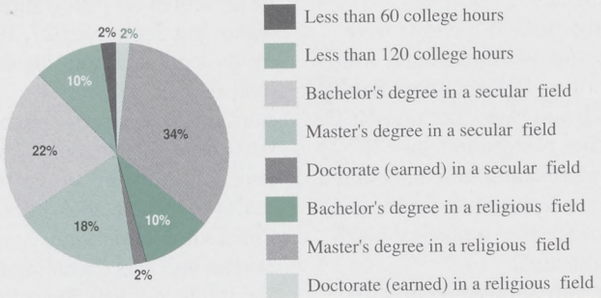
20/20 Vision— training programs relating to cell groups Call 1-800-420-2048 for dates and locations

▶Check with local social service agencies in your area for seminars on HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, lesbian and gay adolescents or other issues.

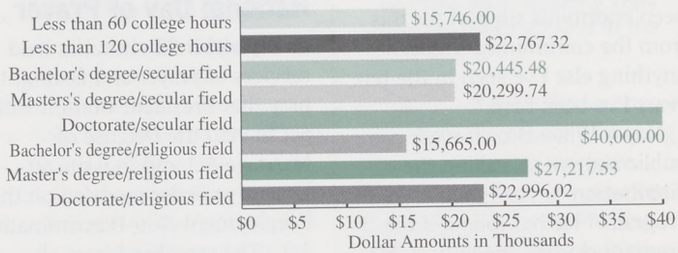
▶Call your local Council of Churches or ministerial association to see if any local churches or dioceses are offering workshops or classes that you could attend.

▶Be sure to keep a record of your continuing education to send to your District Board of Ordained Ministry with your Status Form to show them what you've accomplished. If you know of a great resource for continuing education that you'd like others to know about, please send the information to Director of Clergy Development, Rev. Maggie Tanis, at the UFMCC headquarters.

HIGHEST ACADEMIC LEVEL COMPLETED



HIGHEST LEVEL EDUCATION ACHIEVED*



**Note: When two equivalent degrees were listed (i.e. bachelor's in a secular and in a religious field) religious degree was considered as the highest achieved level.*

This information on the education of UFMCC clergy comes from the 1996 Clergy Support Questionnaire, filled out by more than half of our clergy, representing nine countries and equal numbers of women and men. These charts indicate the highest level of education our clergy have achieved. We also compare the level of compensation to the level of education for clergy in the United States.

HIV/AIDS MINISTRY

Aids Awareness Month

October is AIDS Awareness Month around the world. In addition to the Quilt Display in Washington, D.C., events are scheduled throughout the UFMCC during this month.

It has been observed that in many areas, HIV/AIDS issues have been put on the back burner. This is partly due to the fact that HIV/AIDS is no longer a "new" issue. Another reason could be the hopeful news on successful treatments which came out of the Vancouver AIDS Conference, resulting in a new complacency.

There are a number of reports that HIV testing is down, while a number of gay men have abandoned safer sex practices. Further complicating the issue is the "re-stigmatization" of those who have recently sero-converted, preventing many from getting tested, or coming out to their friends, families, and communities about their HIV status.

During this AIDS Awareness Month, MCC's around the world are urged to continue (or to start) prevention campaigns, and to encourage those at risk to get tested. It is important to know one's HIV status, because there are decided benefits to early treatment. In addition, MCC's are encouraged to do everything possible to ensure a safe space for people to be open about living with HIV and AIDS.

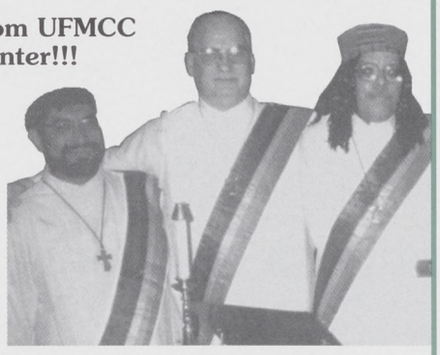
JUSTICE MINISTRY

Welcome Back Rev. Mel White

Rev. Troy Perry and the UFMCC Elders have asked Rev. Mel White to continue serving as Justice Minister a positionthat Mel has filled since January, 1995. It is his honor to accept. Mel and Gary Nixon have moved back to their home town, Laguna Beach. Mel White's new phone number: (310) 360-8640 ext 250; fax number: (714) 494-4079; and e-mail address: RevMel@aol.com

Now available from UFMCC Resource Center!!!

NEW Economy Deacon Stole



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STRATEGIC GROWTH REV. DON EASTMAN

Successful Church Leadership

For the past sixteen years, one of the most helpful resources for leaders of local MCC congregations has been the annual Robert Schuller Institute for Successful Church Leadership. My first visit to this extraordinary conference in 1981 was unquestionably one of the most important and inspiring continuing education experiences of my entire ministry. Since then, many more MCC pastors and lay leaders have enjoyed Dr. Schuller's superb program.

In early 1997, UFMCC's Strategic Growth Team will offer a unique opportunity concurrent with the Institute for Successful Church Leadership, scheduled for January 27-30 at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California. Following the Institute on January 31 SGI team members will facilitate a one-day seminar of MCC participants to discuss the lessons of this program for our ministries. Hosting this one-day seminar will be the nearby Metropolitan Community Church of Long Beach.

Another opportunity following these events will be meetings of senior pastors of mid-sized and large Metropolitan Community Churches. Both groups will be meeting on February 1-4. These meetings offer an excellent opportunity to network, share resources and provide mutual support. For purposes of these meetings, mid-size churches are defined as those with 100 to 250 in average weekly worship attendance; large churches are those with an attendance of more than 250. Pastors of churches with an average weekly attendance of 175 to 250 should feel free to choose whichever group best serves their needs.

Individuals wishing to register for the Robert Schuller Institute for Successful Church Leadership should do so directly by contacting the Crystal Cathedral at (714) 544-5679 or (714) 971-4277. Registration cost for this four-day event is $65.00 (US). Individuals wishing to register for the one-day SGI, on January 31, or those seeking more information, should contact UFMCC Conference Coordinator Nathan Meckley at 310 360-8640 in West Hollywood. There is no registration charge for the one day seminar.

Strategic Growth Team members include Rev. Arlene Ackerman, Rev. Brent Hawkes, Rev. Michael Piazza, Rev. Sandra Robinson, Rev. Nori Rost, Rev. Elder Hong Tan, Mr. Ravi Verma, and Rev. Elder Don Eastman, Chair.

DISTRICTS CLERGY

Looking for a Church or Pastor?

There are new, current and accurate lists of vacant pulpits and available clergy. If you would like a copy of either list or to be added to the lists, please contact Rev. Maggie Tanis, Director of Clergy Development at global headquarters

KEEP IN PRAYER

Rev. Mary Hinsey and MCC With a Vision, Longview, Texas, as they move through transition as Rev. Hinsey resigned her pastorate effective August 1.

Rev. Kermie Wohlenhaus and MCC of the Living Spring, Eureka Springs, Arkansas, as Rev. Wohlenhaus resigned her pastorate on August 18.

Prayers go out to **Rev. Denise Leopold,** pastor of MCC of the Open Arms, Manhattan, Kansas, whose mother died on July 25.

Prayers are requested for **Rev. Charlie Lott,** on staff at Spirit of Hope MCC, Kansas City, Missouri, who lost her son to a gunshot in August.

Alejandro Soria, our Pastoral Leader in Buenos Aires, prayers for peace, courage and strength.

ICM Cristo Sanador, our newest Global Outreach church in Puerto Rico as they recover from the hurricane which swept through their country.

Rev. Sue Wellman of Deo Gloria Family Church in South Africa and her partner Dianne Bennett were in a serious automobile accident earlier this year. Since that time their lives have been "turned upside-down" and Dianne has just had surgery related to her injuries.

Prayer goes out to **Rev. Lee Carlton,** for his health.

CLASSIFIED

Cost is $15 for the first 25 words or less. Additional words are .70 per word. Numbers and abbreviations count as words. All classifieds must be prepaid in U.S. funds. Deadline is the 15th of month prior to publication. All copy is subject to the approval of the Editorial Board. Appearance of advertising does not imply, nor does it constitute endorsement by UFMCC. Mail ads to Keeping In Touch Classifieds, 8704 Santa Monica Blvd, 2nd Floor, West Hollywood, CA 90069

Northwest District seeks person with successful pastoral and administrative skills for District Coordinator following General Conference 1997 for a four year term. The current District Coordinator is expected to apply. Contact NWD UFMCC DC Search Committee through Bob Buhlis, Chair, 228 Commercial St., Nevada City, CA 95959-2507 (VM 916-478-8943, FAX 916-265-3299). Deadline for application packet request is 11/15/96.

Ministry and Nightlife: Part-time Pastor to assist MCC of the Sierras in ministering to "The Biggest Little City in the World". Confidential inquires: P.O.Box 21192, Reno, NV 89515-1192.

Attention Gay Servicemembers! Know your legal rights: say nothing, sign nothing, and get legal help if you are ever investigated. Call Service-member Legal Defense Network for confidential counseling 202-328-FAIR.

24 HENRY GUESTHOUSE is a serene, non-smoking environment close to everything in San Francisco's Gay Castro District. 1-800-900-5686. (415) 864-5686. FAX: 415-864-0406.

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KEEPING IN TOUCH **OCTOBER 1996**

Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation. *Keeping in Touch* may be freely copied for distribution in UFMCC. Portions may be reprinted in UFMCC church publications, with attribution. For other distribution, please request permission. Subscriptions are free upon request. Send address changes, news and ideas to *Keeping in Touch*, 8704 Santa Monica Blvd, 2nd Floor, West Hollywood, CA 90069; 310-360-8640, fax 310-360-8680, UFMCC Email: ufmcchq@aol.com., Web site: http://www.ufmcc.com. Deadline for each issue: l5th of previous month.

Editorial Board
Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, Moderator;
Ravi Verma, Director of Administration

Team Members:
Nancy Fackrell, Elsa Martinez, Dana Cagle

Universal Fellowship of
Metropolitan Community Churches
8704 Santa Monica Boulevard, 2nd Floor
West Hollywood, CA 90069
Telephone: 310-360-8640, Fax: 310-360-8680

FIRST CLASS PRESORT

Top 20 Tithes

August 1996

1. Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas, TX $8,509.67
2. MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX 3,178.42
3. MCC Washington, Washington, DC 1,972.63
4. St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL 1,649.49
5. MCC San Francisco, CA 1,389.95
6. Joy MCC, Orlando, FL 1,258.07
7. Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston, TX 1,139.48
8. MCC Los Angeles, West Hollywood, CA 1,139.25
9. Harvest MCC, Denton, TX 1,037.56
10. MCC New York, New York, NY 1,018.23
11. First MCC of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA 1,012.62
12. MCC Charleston, Charleston, SC 982.95
13. MCC Tampa, Tampa, FL 978.34
14. Covenant MCC, Birmingham, AL 965.28
15. Agape' MCC, Ft. Worth, TX 836.99
16. Spirit of Hope MCC, Kansas City, MO 816.32
17. MCC of Greater St. Louis, St. Louis, MO 783.29
18. River City MCC, Sacramento, CA 688.70
19. MCC New Haven, New Haven, CT 671.69
20. Open Door MCC, Boyds, MD 671.16

(These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to the Fellowship headquarters.)

Top 20 Per Capita

August 1996

1. MCC Johnson County, Shawnee, KS 45.36
2. Safe Harbor MCC, Memphis, TN 36.62
3. MCC of Greater Hayward, San Lorenzo, CA 34.50
4. MCC of the Incarnation, Oak Park, IL 31.29
5. Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston, TX 29.83
6. Gentle Souls MCC, Kansas City, MO 24.91
7. MCC of Greater Tulsa, Tulsa, OK 24.54
8. Christ Chapel MCC, Santa Ana, CA 24.11
9. MCC New Haven, New Haven, CT 23.82
10. MCC Charleston, Charleston, SC 22.91
11. ICM Cristo Rey, New York, NY 22.08
12. Harvest MCC, Denton, TX 21.89
13. Angels of Hope MCC, Green Bay, WI 20.59
14. Spirit Eagle MCC, Spring Valley, CA 19.18
15. MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX 17.60
16. Resurrection Beach MCC, Huntington Bch, CA 17.59
17. St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL 7.51
18. MCC New York, New York, NY 17.35
19. MCC Albuquerque, NM 17.35
20. MCC of Greater St. Louis, MO 17.18

(These figures reflect the average individual weekly offering to the local church.)